

LITTLE COMPTON SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Meeting – November 8, 2010

Wilbur School Commons – 6:00 pm

Members Present: Chairman Tom Alder, Superintendent Kathy Crowley, Principal Jim Gibney, Margaret Manning, Jacob Talbot, Micah Shapiro, Ben Gauthier, Mike Steers, Dorie Freeman, John Osbourne, Bob Mushen, Lynn Brousseau-Lebreux, Beryl Borden, Dave MacGregor, BG Shanklin, Don Gomez, Tom Arkins

Members Absent: Mark Rapp

The Firm of Durkee Brown Architects was in attendance, represented by Doug Brown, Ed Cifune and Ashley Prester

Chairman Tom Alder called the Meeting to Order at 6:07 pm

A motion was made by Jim Gibney, seconded by Micah Shapiro to approve the Meeting Minutes of the October 25, 2010 Meeting. Motion carried unanimously

Revised Estimated Cost:

The Board discussed the changes presented to the building and site

plans at the October 25, 2010 meeting, as well as the financial analysis. Ed Cifune explained the proposed changes to page 22 and 23 of the Educational Specification, reviewed by Superintendent Kathy Crowley and Principal Jim Gibney, with the change to the current computer lab proposed to be a multi-function room, and additional office space of 125 sq ft. in the office at the main entrance. An email was provided to the Board from Rick Karcher, Burt-Hill, dated October 19, 2010, with review comments of the Ed. Spec. The review was very positive for the proposed design, with the only comment for change suggested for the cafeteria space to be used as an alternative classroom use.

Ed provided the Board with Version 4.1 of the Final Space Needs Program, dated November 1, 2010, the Project Justification Summary, Feasibility Study and Version 4.0 of the Project Budget, dated November 8, 2010. Ed stated that 99% of the Stage II Application documentation is complete. The Space Needs Document square footage did not change, and the Feasibility Study was revised. The Project Justification Summary, the first document that RIDE will review, consists of cost comparisons and additional options.

Project Budget changes were presented at the October 25, 2010 Meeting. The proposed project cost is \$18,314,234 with a (five) 5% contingency added to the construction and soft cost, for a total off \$21,616,042.

Proposed Cost Saving Ideas:

The Proposed Cost Saving Ideas were discussed (Memo from Durkee/Brown dated October 20, 2010), such as eliminating the irrigation system and baseball field lights, technology equipment items, slab for new drainage system in existing cafeteria, gray water system, using asphalt shingles and reduction in FF&E allowance.

Mike Steers had concerns with omitting too many items at this time, items that may not be able to be replaced. Mike stated that he is not in a position to understand the impact of eliminating some items especially items that may be eligible for reimbursement. Doug Brown stated that he had a meeting with Joe DaSilva from RIDE, to clearly understand the reimbursement issue. Joe said that \$300 per square foot of construction, is the reimbursement costs formula that is used by the State, and that the current proposed plan is right on track with the formula for reimbursement. Doug also stated that Joe was comfortable with the reduction in areas that have been proposed.

Design development documents will be submitted for another cost estimate, with the numbers fluctuating a bit, based on much more information provided. BG Shanklin has a concern for the elimination of all new computer equipment in the project. Jim Gibney met with the architects and David Vernaglia, the Town's computer consultant to access the technology needs. Jim stated that David does an excellent job with staying on top of the needs within the allowed budget, and that will continue. Jim did have a concern with reduction of certain things such as the landscaping, in that while people in town

are so well intentioned, volunteers may not be in a position to complete the project.

Don Gomez is pleased with the architect's rationale for the proposed reductions while still satisfying the educational standards and the compliance of safety issues. Don wants to see the process continue of submitting the Stage II Application.

Discussions continued on Cost Savings Ideas. The gray water and storm drainage systems were discussed, with Bob Mushen stating that the Town's portion of the waste water system is functioning properly, and that there is no intent on the Town's part to alter that system. The waste water system continues to experience issues with storm water and has not been addressed. John Osbourne stated that the school uses eco-green cleaning materials to help reduce chemicals in the system.

Ben Gauthier was struggling with the comparison of the latest cost analysis vs the previous cost. Because the reductions come from all over the project, the line items have different numbers, so using categories and not line items is the easiest way for a comparison.

Dave MacGregor suggested that perhaps items that were reduced, such as work on the soccer fields, could be placed on an alternative work list to be completed with any possible cost savings. Ben Gauthier disagreed with Dave, suggesting that the idea would be an

entirely different philosophy on spending, and that in his opinion, any cost savings from the project should not be used. Ben also stated that the project has been reduced to a very lean scope, and that any left over contingency will most likely not be realized.

Tom Alder stated that he spend a good amount of the day going through the Town's Comprehensive Plan, and dating back to 1994, he learned that one continuous message in the Plan, is to maximize state funding and reimbursements for projects and also plans to address the lack of Town parking. Tom believes that items proposed in this project that are eligible for State reimbursement, should be done.

Beryl Borden stated that the primarily goal is to educate and that she is very concerned that the classroom square footage is too small and not conducive for educating kids properly.

Discussions continued on the possibility of reducing the size of the kitchen and serving area. Doug Brown explained that RIDE would like to see the current 3 serving blocks reduced to two blocks of time, which means the space has to increase to accommodate 170 students at one sitting. Don Gomez stated that all 3 Boards, Building and School Committee as well as the Town Council should be on board in order for the project to be approved by the public, as the current proposed project meets the State educational minimums. Don stated that he would not be in favor of adding any additional funds.

Site Reductions:

Site Reductions were discussed with Tom Alder stating that he physically spray-painted the site where the building constructed is proposed. Field should remain adequate, but the pitchers mound elevation is still an issue. Safety for the new courtyard was discussed.

Ben Gauthier recapped a conversation with Joe DaSilva, and also provided a draft cover letter to the Committee for the Stage II Application submission. Ben stated that there was a lot of consensus regarding the building, and that Joe was happy with the decision to utilize more of the existing building than originally planned. The Site continues to be a concern, especially with the student drop-off area. Joe strongly urged the Committee to submit the Stage II Application by the November 19, 2010 deadline whether it is incomplete or not, as time to extend the period of performance beyond November 19 is not an option. The Town will address the school parking constraint issue and will review all options for plans to increase parking along the street.

Beryl Borden spoke with Joe DaSilva as well, and stated that he had high regard for the project, and that there is still time to work out site issues after the application is submitted.

The building plan would need to be compatible with the site plan, so if the site changes, the Committee had concerns as to how much the building would have to change. Ed Cifune cautioned the Committee

about the danger of eliminating a site plan all together as part of the application, but did state that RIDE would almost certainly have recommendations for changes, and that the Committee should continue to meet regularly to discuss options. BG Shanklin suggested that the Committee ask Joe DaSilva to recommend a company that could give the Committee a 2nd opinion on the cost estimate.

Tom Alder had concerns that site issues that have not been resolved in the 3 or 4 months that the Committee has been meeting regularly, and asked what the likelihood that the Committee will have a different option? Tom Arkins stated that in hindsight, the Committee should have gone to the Town Council right from the beginning to ask for help in parking relief.

Bob Mushen stated that the Town Council had a public hearing on the building project, which was attended by approximately 100 people, that raised concerns from some folks that the project is still not addressing some educational needs and also that the impact on the Commons is of great concern. Bob suggested that in explaining the project at future meetings, find out just what is bothering folks about the project, and justify decisions that have been made.

BG Shanklin raised the issue of a Plan B, doing just what is absolutely necessary, and it seems that folks want an alternative plan with concrete evidence that any plan is addressing all the issues.

Additional Stage II Items:

Jim Gibney and Kathy Crowley have been working to create a Design Committee, which will consist of two students, maintenance, parents and administration working with the construction manager on such things as color schemes, size of desks, selecting equipment etc. This requirement is part of the Stage II Application submission.

Work to be done:

Tom Alder had an idea to create a smaller subcommittee for project justification and to provide recommendations of possible changes and addressing incomplete items. The Committee will owe the State a timetable of when incomplete application items will be submitted. Doug Brown cautioned the Committee to be mindful of the time-line, that things need to be completed fairly quickly and carefully due to the construction start date to be able to utilize most of the summer months for construction. Ben Gauthier will work with the Chair and Durkee Brown to complete the cover letter for Stage II Application submission.

Motion by Tom Alder, 2nd by Lynn Brousseau-Lebreux, to create a Design Review Subcommittee for project justification, to provide recommendations of possible changes and to address incomplete Stage II Application items. Subcommittee to include BG Shanklin; Ben Gauthier; Bob Mushen, representing the Town Council; Don Gomez, representing the School Committee; Mike Steers representing the Planning Board and Kathy Crowley, representing School

Administration. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment:

Larry Anderson stated concern for the political and legal ramifications of talking to one member from the State, Joe DaSilva, and also for the timing of alternative options in getting the project to the General Assembly for approval. Mr. Anderson gave a suggestion to the Committee to consider getting legal and financial advice on the Bond ramifications to the Town. Mike Steers agreed that the town should contract with a bondsman to independently advise the Committee. Bob Mushen stated that the Town has contracted the firm of Edwards and Angel for previous bonds.

John Lint suggested that the Committee communicate with public and address rumors that he has heard such as sending 7 & 8 graders to the high school. Kathy Crowley assured Mr. Lint, that the rumor is just that, a rumor, and discussions have not taken place to consider this option. Mr. Lint also suggested that the Stage II Application and plan drawings be made available for public review at Town Hall and perhaps the library.

Mr. Healey stated that he obtained a copy of the Ed Spec and read it carefully and although he is not an educational expert, he had comments on the structure of the document not being clearly written, with over 100 times, the words “should” or “will” appearing in the document. He feels the document needs a more positive message,

and that the beginning, which states the historical view, has some serious misstatements of facts. He challenged the Committee to read the entire document, as he did.

There was public comment regarding the correlation of money spent and educational outputs and metrics on measuring student success. Kathy Crowley explained the State-wide move for requiring a lot more data to have comparisons between the State school districts, resulting in metrics for return on investments. Kathy stated that student achievement data is a regular discussion that she, as the Superintendent, has with the School Committee and that she believes this school project will address all of the improvements needed. Beryl Borden suggested that student achievement metrics should be followed through the high school level. Beryl spoke again, of her concern for small classrooms, and that the community does not need a larger school, but a more well thought out school.

Mr. Hayden asked about State reimbursement. Ben Gauthier explained that reimbursement is for principle and interest, based on the guidelines of \$300 per square feet if financed through RIBEC. If not financed through RIBEC, the reimbursement is based on principal only.

Roger Lord requested, as a matter of policy, that when the Building Committee when making public statements regarding building cost, use the total number, including principal and interest. Tom said that

he would do that, as long as the Tax Payer's Association agreed to use cost numbers based on State reimbursement.

Ben Gauthier suggested that a subcommittee effort could be to create a condensed factual document so that the public can easily understand the project without having to look through pages and pages of information

Mr. Lint suggested that Committee member's names and telephone numbers should be accessible to the public.

Mr. Anderson asked about the payment schedule for the Bond – Ben Gauthier stated that after an anticipatory note and Certificate of Occupancy Permit is issued, the 1st payment would be due.

Motion by Tom Alder to accept the current Educational Specification Document and subsequent Space Needs Program as redefined as of October 25, 2010, and add both documents to the Stage II Application, 2nd by Micah Shapiro. Motion approved 15-2 with Tom Alder, Kathy Crowley, Jim Gibney, Jacob Talbot, Micah Shapiro, Ben Gauthier, Mike Steers, Dorie Freeman, John Osbourne, Bob Mushen, Lynn Brousseau-Lebreux, Dave MacGregor, BG Shanklin, Don Gomez and Tom Arkins in favor, and Margaret Manning and Beryl Borden opposed.

Beryl Borden asked about classroom needs in regard to the reduced

size of classrooms with this project. Kathy Crowley explained that the classroom size is in compliance with RIDE standards. Tom stated that this discussion is getting into areas that would require more in depth than what the Building Committee is charged to do, and that the topic is not on the agenda. Kathy Crowley stated that Little Compton has one of the best class sizes in the State, and those discussions with Joe DaSilva as well as working with the architects, has resulted in a flexible room to address increased student class size. Dorie Freeman agreed with the space analysis research that Beryl had stated, and that RIDE does not support this research. Don Gomez stated that the architects spent lots of time on the classroom issues, and that the present design is much more educationally sound.

Motion was made by Tom Alder to accept the current Building Design as of Nov 8, 2010, and add document to the Stage II Application, 2nd by Micah Shapiro.

Motion by Ben Gauthier to amend the above motion to add, "subject to improvements possibly realized by design review subcommittee", amendment 2nd by Micah Shapiro. Motion approved 14-3 with Tom Alder, Kathy Crowley, Jim Gibney, Jacob Talbot, Micah Shapiro, Ben Gauthier, Mike Steers, Dorie Freeman, John Osbourne, Bob Mushen, Lynn Brousseau-Lebreux, Dave MacGregor, Don Gomez and Tom Arkins in favor, and Margaret Manning, BG Shanklin and Beryl Borden opposed.

Margaret Manning suggested that the Committee go back and address Stage I, and stated that she will not support an incomplete Stage II Application submission.

Motion to approve the amended motion approved 16-1, with Margaret Manning opposed.

Motion to accept the current Building Design as of Nov 8, 2010, and add document to the Stage II Application subject to improvements possibly realized by design review subcommittee approved 14-3 with Tom Alder, Kathy Crowley, Jim Gibney, Jacob Talbot, Micah Shapiro, Ben Gauthier, Mike Steers, Dorie Freeman, John Osbourne, Bob Mushen, Lynn Brousseau-Lebreux, Dave MacGregor, Don Gomez and Tom Arkins in favor, and Tom Alder, Kathy Crowley, Jim Gibney, Jacob Talbot, Micah Shapiro, Ben Gauthier, Mike Steers, Dorie Freeman, John Osbourne, Bob Mushen, Lynn Brousseau-Lebreux, Dave MacGregor, Don Gomez and Tom ArkinsMargaret Manning, Beryl Borden and BG Shanklin opposed.

Tom Arkins asked for Committee help in amending the motion to direct Durkee Brown to do a bare bones cost analysis at additional expense. Tom Alder stated that this request should be addressed at another meeting, as it is not on the agenda, and could possibly require an additional RFP.

Motion by Tom Alder 2nd by Ben Gauthier, to accept the Version 6 Design, to be submitted with the Stage II Application, subject to improvements possibly realized by design review subcommittee, 2nd by Ben Gauthier. Motion approved 13-4 with Tom Alder, Kathy Crowley, Jim Gibney, Jacob Talbot, Micah Shapiro, Ben Gauthier, Dorie Freeman, John Osbourne, Bob Mushen, Lynn Brousseau-Lebreux, Dave MacGregor, BG Shanklin and Don Gomez in favor. Margaret Manning, Mike Steers, Tom Arkins and Beryl Borden opposed.

Motion made by Tom Alder, 2nd by Lynn Brousseau-Lebreux, to present current Stage II Application to the School Committee for consideration at their November 10, 2010 Meeting. Motion approved unanimously.

Ben Gauthier asked what the purpose is for Tom Arkin's suggestion on an alternative proposal to include phasing. He cautioned not to call it a Plan B, as it does not meet the needs of school. For contrasting costs, this would be a good exercise for the subcommittee to present to the public.

Next SBC Meeting is scheduled for November 15, 2010 at 6 pm. The Agenda to include discussions on presenting the project to the Town Council at their November 18, 2010 Meeting. Tom Arkins requested an agenda item to discuss the RGB Plan.

Motion to adjourn at 9:07 pm by Dave MacGregor, seconded by Jim Gibney. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

**Laura Rom, Recording Clerk
LC School Building Committee
Little Compton, RI**